


BROADBAND EXPANSION GRANT APPLICATION

For Fiscal Year 2022

 Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
 RECEIVED: 03/17/2022 12:25:51 PM

| | |
|---|--|
| Primary Applicant (Name and Address): WiConnect Wireless LLC 2670 East Main St Suite F Reedsburg WI 53959 | Applications MUST be UPLOADED to ERF via the Commission's website, http://psc.wi.gov/apps35/ERF_upload/content/mymenu.aspx . Refer to section 2.3 for detailed instructions. Applications are due and MUST be uploaded to ERF no later than: March 17, 2022 at 4:00pm (16:00) Central Time. Late applications will not be accepted. |
| | Contact for further information: PSCStatebroadbandoffice@wisconsin.gov |
| | Date: March 17, 2022 |
| The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin is seeking applications for Broadband Expansion Grants. The Commission may award one or more grants during Fiscal Year 2022 to public and private entities that meet the eligibility requirements set forth in Wis. Stat. § 196.504. This grant round will be funded with bond proceeds authorized by the Wisconsin Building Commission pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 13.48(30). As such, successful applicants are subject to the requirements of Wis. Stat. § 13.48(30). Successful applicants will demonstrate a clear and achievable plan to improve broadband communications services in one or more underserved areas in the State. | |
| Applicant Certification: In signing this application, the undersigned verifies under penalty of perjury that the Applicant and its employees and agents have not, either directly or indirectly, entered into any agreement or participated in any collusion or otherwise taken any action in restraint of free competition with respect to this application; that no attempt has been made to induce any other person or firm to submit or not to submit an application; that this application has been independently arrived at without collusion with any other proposer, competitor or potential competitor; that this application has not been knowingly disclosed prior to the opening of applications to any other applicant or competitor; that all of the responses and representations of Applicant in this application are true and correct to the best of the undersigned's knowledge, information, and belief; and that Applicant agrees to, accepts, and will comply with all of the terms and conditions respecting this application and any award of a broadband expansion grant as may be established in a grant award Agreement. | |
| Name of Authorized Representative (Type or Print) <div style="text-align: center;">Dave Bangert</div> | Title <div style="text-align: center;">President</div> |
| Signature of Authorized Representative  | Date <div style="text-align: center;">03/17/2022</div> |
| Phone: <div style="text-align: center;">608-524-1579</div> | |

SUMMARY OF GRANT APPLICATION

| | |
|--|--|
| Primary Applicant Name WiConnect Wireless LLC | Amount of Broadband Grant Request (round to nearest dollar) \$353,000 |
| Federal Employer Identification No. 27-0690097 | Amount of Matching Funds Pledged (round to nearest dollar) \$532,000 |
| Contact Name and Title Dave Bangert President | Total Cost of Proposed Project (round to nearest dollar) \$885,000 |
| Telephone Number 608-524-1579 | Project Name Ithaca Township FTTH |
| E-mail Address(es) dave@ccwis.com | Type of Proposed Broadband Service (FTTH, Cable, DSL, etc.) FTTH |
| Grant Manager, if different than Primary Applicant | Type of Proposed Project (Last-mile, Middle-Mile, backbone, other) Last Mile Fiber |
| Grant Manager Contact Name | Grant Manager Email Address and Telephone Number |
| If the application proposes a public-private partnership, list the names, addresses, and FEINs of the partner companies or organizations | |
| Brief Project Description (2 sentences) Fiber to the Home for unserved roads in Ithaca Township, Richland County WI. | |
| Maximum Proposed Download Transmission Speed 1000Mb | Maximum Proposed Upload Transmission Speed 1000Mb |
| Minimum Proposed Download Speed to Customer Location 100Mb | Minimum Proposed Upload Transmission Speed to Customer Location 100Mb |
| County or Counties served by this project Richland County | Community or Communities served by this project Ithaca Township |
| List of the broadband service providers, if any, currently serving the area the applicant proposes to serve WiConnect Wireless US Cellular ATT Wireless Verizon Wireless Bug Tussel Wireless | |

| | |
|--|---|
| Does proposed project serve an <u>unserved</u> area of the State, as defined in Section 1.4 of the application instruction? (yes/no) No | Is the Applicant certified as a Broadband Forward! Community or Telecommuter Forward! Community, or does the grant project propose to serve a Broadband Forward! Community or Telecommuter Forward! Community? (yes/no) No |
| For last mile projects or component, the expected number of Business Locations that will have access to the improved broadband service (i.e., total business locations passed or with new service access). 19 | For last mile projects or components the expected number of Residential Locations that will have access to the improved broadband service (i.e., total residential locations passed or with new service access). 128 |
| Of the improved business locations, how many locations are <i>unserved</i> ? 19 | Of the improved residential locations, how many are <i>unserved</i> ? 128 |
| For providers that are eligible telecommunications carriers will the proposed broadband service be available to Lifeline customers? (yes/no) Yes | Are there any programs available for low-income households to access low-cost service or discounts? (yes/no) no |
| Is the internet service provider currently participating in the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program? (yes/no) no | Is the internet service provider currently participating in the Department of Public Instruction and CESA purchasing's Digital Learning Bridge? (yes/no) no |
| Did the internet service provider participate in the Public Service Commission's voluntary Broadband Coverage Data Collection in 2021? (yes/no) yes | |

FY22 Broadband Expansion Grant Application

Budget & Income Summary



Grant Summary

| | |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| Grant Applicant: | Project: |
| WiConnect Wireless LLC | Ithaca Township FTTH |

Budget

| Line: | Description / Category: | Grant Funds: | Match: | Total: |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1 | Contractual, Consultant Fees | | | |
| 2 | Equipment | | \$ 308,000.00 | \$ 308,000.00 |
| 3 | Supplies | \$353,000.00 | | \$ 353,000.00 |
| 4 | Labor (Salary, Fringe) | | \$ 224,000.00 | \$ 224,000.00 |
| 5 | Permitting, Licensing Fees | | | |
| 6 | Travel | | | |
| 7 | Other | | | |
| Total: | | \$ 353,000.00 | \$ 532,000.00 | \$ 885,000.00 |
| 60.1% match requested | | | | |

Pledged Contributions

| #: | Entity: | Entity Type: | Pledge Type: | Pledge: |
|--------|---------|--------------|--------------|---------|
| 1 | | Other | Cash | |
| 2 | | | | |
| 3 | | | | |
| 4 | | | | |
| 5 | | | | |
| 6 | | | | |
| 7 | | | | |
| 8 | | | | |
| 9 | | | | |
| 10 | | | | |
| Total: | | | | \$ - |

Match total should be equal to pledge total. Please include all project contributions, including from the applicant.

Grant Application for WiConnect Wireless

Project Name: Ithaca Township Fiber to the Home

Grant Applicant:

3.2.1 Applicant Identification and Contact Information

3.2.1.A:

WiConnect Wireless LLC
2670 East Main Street Suite F
Reedsburg WI 53959
608-524-1579
David Bangert
President
Dave@ccwis.com
www.wicw.net

3.2.2 Project Description

3.2.2.A: Mapping

Ithaca Township FTTH Broadband Expansion

The map below shows each road that is planned as part of this construction project. The total mileage of roads in Ithaca Township covered by this proposal is approximately 31 miles. Each of the roads proposed does have a portion of that road covered by wireless providers but a majority of each of these roads are under-served. The map shows our active fiber along State Hwy 58 in orange. Proposed township roads are in blue. The red areas of the map are considered underserved from the latest PSC broadband map.

Ithaca Township FTTH

Legend

Fiber - Feeder
(Active)

count

— 48

— <all other values>

Fiber - Feeder
(Proposed)

count,active

— 12,<Count>

— 48,<Count>

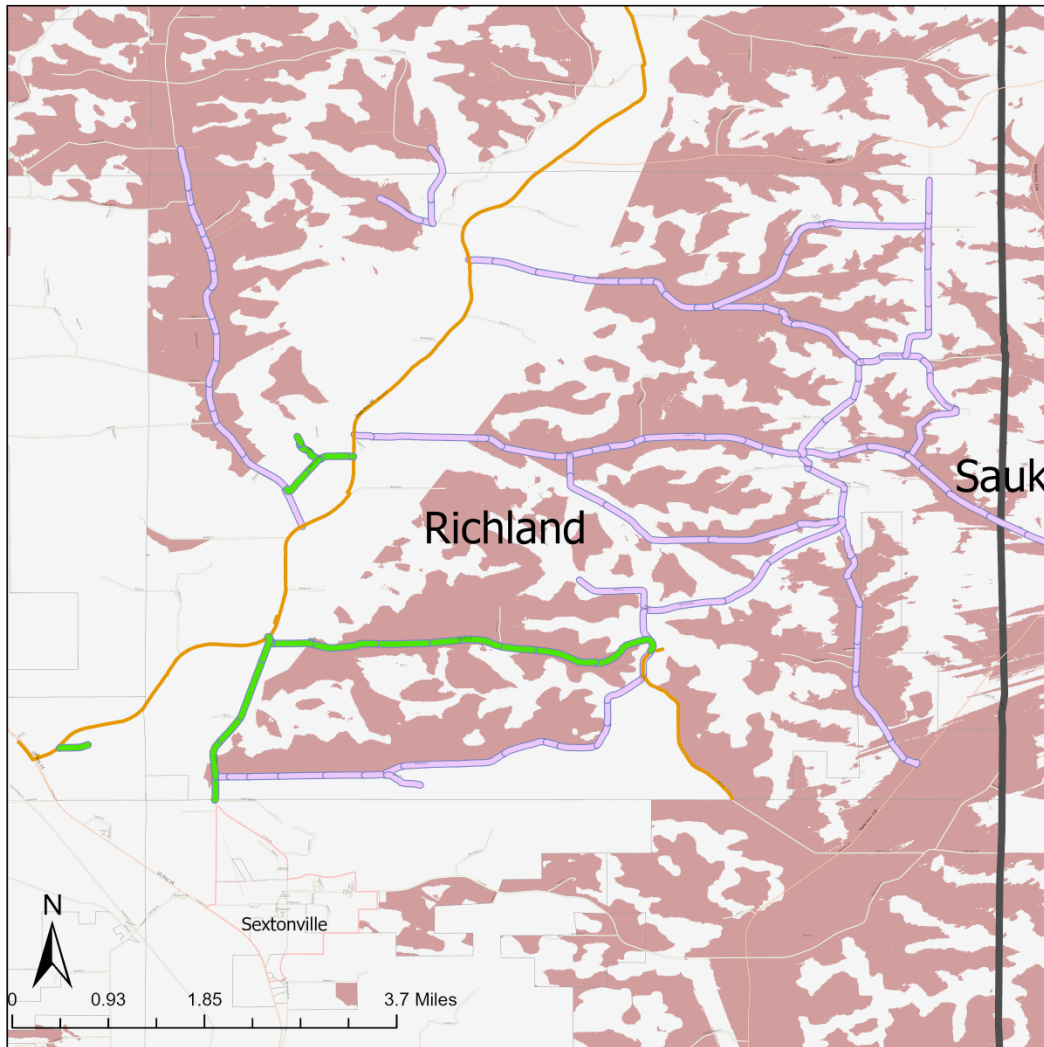
— <all other values>

Fiber - Feeder
(Active)

count

— 48

— <all other values>



3.2.2.B: Current Services

As shown with the maps included with this proposal, the terrain in Ithaca Township is hills and valleys. Currently Ithaca Township is serviced by Frontier Communications as its local CLEC. State Hwy 58 running through the township has middle-mile fiber from LaValle Telephone Cooperative with a grant from the state broadband fund. The PSC Map of the area shows many of my proposed side roads as being served, however, there are no fiber lines ran up any of these township roads. The areas already serviced by fiber are not part of the areas that are being requested for funding. WiConnect Wireless provides services to a majority of these areas through our existing wireless network. Forty five percent of all the homes proposed in the grant are already customers of WiConnect Wireless fixed wireless internet solution. They are able to receive wireless internet connectivity from US Cellular, ATT wireless, Verizon Wireless, and Bug Tussel Wireless. Existing service providers are unable to provide consistent service into many of the valleys and rural areas of Ithaca Township.

3.2.2.C: Broadband Access

The following table shows homes per road, business per road, and existing customers that WiConnect Wireless currently provides service through our fixed wireless internet solution.

| Road Names | Homes Past | Business Past | Existing Wireless | Under-Served |
|----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| Jaquish Hollow Road | 12 | 3 | 4 | 10 |
| Jaquish Hollow South | 4 | 0 | 4 | 4 |
| Jaquish Hollow North | 9 | 3 | 1 | 9 |
| Keysville Ridge Road | 24 | 6 | 3 | 16 |
| Walnut Road | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Canyon Drive | 3 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| Clear Springs Lane | 2 | 0 | 0 | |
| Rustic Village Lane | 9 | 0 | 11 | |
| Hwy N to Hwy 130 | 29 | 1 | 18 | 25 |
| Nebraska Hollow Road | 22 | 2 | 10 | 20 |
| Apple Ridge Road | 6 | 1 | 6 | 5 |
| County Hwy T | 6 | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| Totals | 128 | 19 | 64 | 100 |

WiConnect Wireless Current Fiber Service Plan pricing:

| Internet Plan | Download/Upload | Pricing |
|----------------------|------------------------|----------------|
| Fiber Premium | 100Mbps/100Mbps | \$63.00/Month |
| Fiber Platinum | 200Mbps/200Mbps | \$73.00/Month |
| Fiber 500 | 500Mbps/500Mbps | \$130.00/Month |
| Fiber 1000 | 1Gbps/1Gbps | \$200.00/Month |
| Custom Packages | | |

3.2.2.D: Last Mile Proposal

Ithaca Township FTTH project will be a last-mile fiber construction project utilizing our existing Mainline Fiber.

3.2.2.E: Proposed Service Info

WiConnect Wireless proposes to construct a Fiber-To-The-Home (FTTH) system offering dedicated download and upload speeds up to 1Gps, consisting of buried fiber optic cable and conduit, utilizing a Gigabit Passive Optical Network, or GPON architecture. GPON standards can scale to even faster speeds as technology and GPON standards improve with only upgrades to the electronics on either end of the fiber optic cable. We have not yet reached the theoretical limit of how much information can be transmitted along a fiber optic cable, especially when utilizing Wave Division Multiplexing (WDM), which simply means combining multiple “colors” of light on a single fiber. Fiber optics allow for the highest quality and dependability for broadband and telecommunication services as there is very little maintenance involved with a FTTH system. Fiber is immune to weather conditions such as temperature, lightning, and electromagnetic interference that plague typical copper and cable systems. Additionally, underground facilities provide for the longest life and is safest

for the outside plant as wind and storms rarely affect underground plant, arguably providing for better public safety.

3.2.2.F: Not Applicable

3.2.2.G: Build-out Schedule

Below is a projection of the buildout schedule by week: The days of completion are based on past performance data collected by WiConnect employees in similar ground and terrain conditions. Weather, material availability and equipment issues are not figured into this proposed schedule. Terrain and proximity constraints are also included in planning this schedule.

| | |
|----------------------|------------|
| Jaquish Hollow Road | Week1 |
| Jaquish Hollow South | week2-3 |
| Jaquish Hollow North | Week 3-4 |
| Keysville Ridge Road | Week 4-7 |
| Walnut Road | Week 7-8 |
| Canyon Drive | Week 9-11 |
| Clear Springs Lane | Week 12 |
| Rustic Village Lane | Week 12 |
| Hwy N to Hwy 130 | Week 13-15 |
| Nebraska Hollow Road | Week 16-19 |
| Apple Ridge Road | Week 20-22 |
| County Hwy T | Week 23-26 |

3.2.3 Itemized Budget

3.2.3.A: Material Costs per Road

The Ithaca Township project requires around \$353,000 worth of materials to build the mainline fiber on each road of the project. When possible, WiConnect will source from Wisconsin based companies including fiber from Millennium in Delevan, WI and Teel Pipe from Baraboo, WI. These costs of the product are detailed below:

| Road Names | Fiber Cost | Conduit Cost | Splice | Vaults | Peds | Splice Closure | Grounding | Total |
|----------------------|------------|--------------|--------|----------|---------|----------------|-----------|----------|
| Jaquish Hollow Road | \$5,107 | \$9,428 | \$352 | \$5,280 | \$0 | \$2,849 | \$990 | \$24,006 |
| Jaquish Hollow South | \$3,514 | \$6,488 | \$192 | \$2,400 | \$0 | \$1,295 | \$450 | \$14,339 |
| Jaquish Hollow North | \$6,589 | \$12,165 | \$320 | \$3,840 | \$0 | \$2,072 | \$720 | \$25,707 |
| Keysville Ridge Road | \$11,751 | \$21,694 | \$640 | \$10,080 | \$480 | \$5,439 | \$1,890 | \$51,975 |
| Walnut Road | \$2,746 | \$5,069 | \$64 | \$960 | \$0 | \$518 | \$180 | \$9,536 |
| Canyon Drive | \$6,425 | \$11,861 | \$192 | \$3,360 | \$0 | \$1,813 | \$630 | \$24,089 |
| Clear Springs Lane | \$1,922 | \$3,548 | \$480 | \$960 | \$0 | \$518 | \$180 | \$7,608 |
| Rustic Village Lane | \$1,373 | \$2,534 | \$128 | \$1,920 | \$480 | \$1,036 | \$360 | \$7,831 |
| Hwy N to Hwy 130 | \$15,293 | \$28,233 | \$800 | \$10,560 | \$1,440 | \$5,698 | \$1,980 | \$64,004 |
| Nebraska Hollow Road | \$9,692 | \$17,893 | \$512 | \$7,680 | \$480 | \$4,144 | \$1,440 | \$41,841 |
| Apple Ridge Road | \$8,237 | \$15,206 | \$416 | \$4,800 | \$480 | \$2,590 | \$900 | \$32,629 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| County Hwy T | \$13,508 | \$24,938 | \$704 | \$6,240 | \$0 | \$3,367 | \$1,170 | \$49,928 |
| Totals | \$86,157 | \$159,059 | \$4,608 | \$58,080 | \$3,360 | \$31,339 | \$10,890 | \$353,493 |

With the current state of the supply chain and price inflation, predicting future materials pricing is difficult. We are estimating an additional 10 percent cost above what the current cost of the materials to help minimize the effects of supply chain volatility.

3.2.3.B: Grant Proceeds

No expenses for monthly bandwidth costs or other recurring costs will be used from grant proceeds.

3.2.3.C: Grant Proceeds Usage

Supplies for the building of this project are the only funds requested for this proposal.

3.2.4 Priority Factors Supporting Application

3.2.4.A: Matching Funds

The matching funds for this project come from the operation of our existing business. The costs for our matching funds are made up of both Labor and Construction equipment expenses. Our labor rates are based on current crew of four employees with an average installation of around 1500 to 2000 feet per day.

| | |
|--|---------|
| Hourly Rate of Mainline Construction Labor | \$145 |
| Average footage per day | 1500 |
| Hours per day | 8 |
| Daily Labor Rate | \$1,160 |

Total Cost of Construction **\$224,000.00**

Our Construction equipment lease and maintenance costs are shown in the table below:

| | | |
|--|---------------------------------|------------------|
| Construction Equipment Rental per hour | | |
| Vermeer Directional Drill | | \$130 |
| Vermeer Trencher | | \$45 |
| Trucks/Trailers | | \$45 |
| Mini ex | | \$45 |
| Total Construction Equipment | \$265/hr x 40hrs x 36wks | \$308,000 |

Splicing operations for each vault, pedestal, and home are also included in our total labor amount for this project. Our splicing crew averages about 4 hours per vault in a rural 48 Count fiber installation. This calculates out to about \$55,000 in labor for our splicing operations

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Splicing Crew Costs | |
| Costs per hour | \$85 |
| Average Hours per Vault | 4 |
| Vaults | 206 |
| Total Splicing Operations | \$41,140 |

Drop installation crew averages about 2 drops per day in normal conditions and the costs associated with this project are calculated based on past performance of our Ithaca and Seneca Fiber projects. The cost of install per home is projected at \$57,600.

Home Drop Installation Costs

| | |
|---------------------|----------|
| Total Drop Labor | \$20,800 |
| Total Drop Material | \$15,680 |
| Total Electronics | \$21,120 |

Total Home Installation Costs **\$57,600**

Total matching funds for this project are \$532,000 in construction equipment and labor. This project would take approximately 28 weeks to complete. Customers would be added as each road or leg of the network was completed.

3.2.4.B: Ithaca Township Partnership

Ithaca Township has written a letter of support for the project but as of the date of the application has not made any commitment of funds to the project.

3.2.4.C: Existing Broadband Service

As shown with the map included with this proposal, the terrain in Ithaca Township is Hills and Valleys. Currently Ithaca township is serviced by Frontier Communications as its local CLEC. WiConnect Wireless Fixed Wireless internet currently serves 64 of the homes in the proposed service area with Fixed Wireless Internet. WiConnect also provides Fiber to the home's services to everyone along State Hwy 58 There are no existing DSL services in most of the areas that this grant is proposed for because of the age and condition of the old copper lines. The Main State Road through the Village of Ithaca has fiber internet from LaValle Telephone funded from a state grant. The areas that are already serviced by fiber are not part of the areas that are being requested for funding. WiConnect Wireless provides services to a majority of these areas through our existing Wireless Network. They are also able to receive service from US Cellular, ATT wireless, Verizon Wireless, and Bug Tussel Wireless.

3.2.4.D: Project Impact

From past experience and from a perspective of our existing customers around 80 percent of the homes will be signing up for service in our proposed area. As an example of our estimation of future performance based on past performance, we will use our Hwy 130 Fiber project in Bear Valley that was completed as of August 2021 as an example. We had 51 homes along Hwy 130 and Hwy JJ that we passed during our construction. Currently 47 of those homes have been installed with WiConnect Wireless fiber internet service. Of those 51 homes 44 of them had been customers of our fixed wireless internet service.

3.2.4.E: Scalability

Many of our existing customers would see large increases in capacity and reliability with a fiber internet connection that we would provide to their home. WiConnect Wireless would be able to provide additional service such as Telephone, Television, Security, and specialized data circuits over this fiber plant. Locating businesses in this rural community would now be possible as access to the resources needed to support them

would be available. Our Fiber plant would have the capacity to expand to 10Gps to the home in the future with very little change needed in the physical plant infrastructure. Our infrastructure would provide all the needed capacity requirements for the foreseeable future.

WiConnect Wireless would also be able to link this network to additional network nodes over the next several years to create even further redundancy to our fiber plant including multiple internet providers and paths to the internet. This would allow for a more reliable internet connection as we continue to expand our network. We currently own and operate the cable tv and internet plant in Loganville Wisconsin and intend to build fiber to that plant to allow us to deliver TV from that head end facility to all our existing Fiber and Fixed Wireless customers.

3.2.3.F: Economic Impact

WiConnect Wireless and its Fiber to the Home Buildout adds some great economic benefits to the communities it services. These impacts are highlighted in three main areas of importance:

- Home Values
 - A study by the Fiber Broadband Association in 2014 showed that the value of a home that has Fiber Internet increased its value by 3.1%. This impact will help to boost sales of homes and help with supporting the building of new homes in these serviced areas.
- Local Economic Impact
 - WiConnect Hires people from within the communities we service. We support our customers in our networks with local technicians. We help keep skilled jobs in our local rural economies allowing us to support other local businesses while building and growing our business.
 - Many of our customers support our ideas of smaller community-based services vs large corporations or co-ops controlling all access to broadband.
 - Our Local, State, and City governments benefit from higher GDP.
 - Ithaca Township will be able to attract new business as well as keep existing businesses growing with access to high-capacity internet.
- Access To World Markets
 - Ability for business to gain access to world economies
 - Knowledge available through distance learning
 - Impact on Educational resources improving
 - Impact on Health Care as distance medicine becomes available via improved internet access

WiConnect Wireless employees live and work in the communities that we serve. We are a local company dedicated to installing, maintaining, and supporting internet and technology in those communities. The impact on the local economy of providing reliable fiber internet to these rural areas is hard to quantify in numbers. However, local realtors have expressed the heavy purchasing impact of what internet availability there is to homes since the Covid outbreak. Some studies have shown up to 7% higher values of homes with fiber internet over other forms of internet connectivity. For this rural community it would allow for the possibility of greater workforce availability for existing employers both locally and globally. The additional bandwidth would also support online schooling and learning capabilities that are now limited by lack of available bandwidth. Businesses that are struggling with bandwidth limitations would also be able to be more competitive and have the resources needed to grow their business and be competitive in an ever-changing online marketplace.

3.2.3.G: Broadband Service to Adjacent Areas

WiConnect Wireless installation of fiber to the home will not interfere with any future expansion by other providers in the future. Each of the roads in question currently only have old copper installed on one side of the road ROW. We normally try to install our facilities on the opposite side of the road from existing services unless the terrain and cost is prohibitive.

This fiber buildout will actually improve the ability for us to deliver better service to the areas not directly installed with fiber. Several tower sites providing existing customers with fixed wireless internet connectivity will also be able to be installed with fiber as we go past our existing tower sites. This will improve the capacity to our fixed wireless customers on our network.

3.2.5 Supporting Information

3.2.5. A: WiConnect Wireless History

WiConnect Wireless has spent the last 15 years building a reliable fixed wireless network to provide last mile connectivity to some of the most challenging areas of the Southwestern Corner of Wisconsin. Our network provides services to over 2000 customers in the hardest to serve areas of this driftless region. We have built this network with support from the communities that we service and with loyal support from thousands of customers. We are continuing with that tradition of bringing service to the hardest to reach customers with our fiber internet GPON solutions. Help with funding on projects like this will ensure that we can continue to grow and provide these last mile services to our existing customers and continue to support our operations while doing so.

WiConnect Wireless received a fixed wireless Wisconsin Broadband Grant in 2014 in the amount of \$35,469, the first year that the Wisconsin Broadband Grants were released. This grant helped us to build out some challenging sites in Sauk and Iowa Counties in the Wisconsin River Valley. Those sites have been upgraded several times since 2014 but continue to provide much needed internet connectivity to underserved areas.

Over the past five years WiConnect Wireless has been adding equipment and crew to support our own fiber buildout projects in both Richland and Crawford Counties. In 2020 we invested in and installed around 15 miles of mainline fiber providing services to around 150 homes and businesses along HWY 58. We also installed fiber in the village of Seneca in Crawford County. In 2021 we installed 17 miles of Fiber in Richland County to provide fiber to rural areas of Hwy 130 in Bear Valley from Lone Rock WI. We added an additional 100 homes and 5 businesses with fiber internet. This build is completely paid for by our operations and fiscal responsibility.

We currently employ 4 full time mainline crew employees, 1 fiber splicer, 2 drop crew employees and 4 support staff. We operate a call center to support our customers and provide computer support services from the same offices. Our existing business supports both wireless and wired customers in 7 counties in Southwestern Wisconsin.

Our existing business model has afforded us the ability to use profits from existing operations to support and finance our fiber build outs in these communities. We still have several challenges to our projects as funding these rural areas takes many years to gain a return on our investment. However, that mainline investment now allows us the ability to service areas that we were unable to service before. A grant to help us build these rural communities would allow us to continue to build and grow as we provide internet to the communities that we live and work in.

3.2.5.B: Service Duplication

WiConnect Fiber to the Home will not duplicate any services of high-speed internet in the service areas that we are proposing.

3.2.5.C: Financial Information

WiConnect Wireless is a financially sound company. WiConnect Wireless supports its fiber installation operations with our current staff and pay for our materials as we build the fiber plant. We have a small line of credit with our local bank to support larger material purchases when needed.

3.2.5.I: Letters of Support

Several Letters have been shared in support of our current Fixed Wireless internet and our Fiber expansion projects.



31128 Apple Ridge Road
Richland center, WI 53581

To Whom it may Concern,

I am writing this letter in support of WConnect Wireless for the rural Broadband Grant. As a business in rural Richland County, we are at a big disadvantage with our internet abilities. We rely on our internet to conduct many aspects of our business. Our store uses a point-of-sale system and inventory system that is dependent on Wi-Fi, our production and food safety systems use Wi-Fi for tracking and recording all aspects of our daily production. With our computerized packing line, we are unable to utilize a large portion of the technology and customer support because our internet connection is not up to the speeds we need. In the peak of our season, we often times have to wait till later times in the day or evening to enter data or reports because during peak times we do not have the capacity or speed to do multiple Wi-Fi activities at once. By getting high speed internet to our business, it would enable us to get to a level playing field with our competitors in other states. We are very concerned with future technologies that are on the horizon that we don't believe we will be able to adapt if our internet services stay where they currently are. This will put us further behind our competitors in other areas.

We have used WConnect Wireless for years for our internet. They have been a very reliable company and have always served us well. They have worked hand and hand with us to help with our internet needs, but we have reached the limits with the current technology. We desperately need high speed wireless internet to our business to be able to advance our business and compete in the present and the future. WConnect has high speed fiber buried very close to our operation currently. We believe by giving them a grant to continue this work it is the most economical and efficient way to get the businesses and homeowners in this area up to a level playing field.

Sincerely,

Steve Louis, President, Oakwood Fruit Farm

March 14, 2022

Re: High Speed Internet

To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept this letter as a letter of support for the application to install and upgrade the Internet infrastructure for the township of Willow and Ithaca located in Richland County proposed by Wi Connect Wireless.

Consistently the number one challenge we are hearing from businesses and entrepreneurs is the lack of adequate Internet service. This is now compounded by the added need of our students and teachers as we deal with the pandemic. Many of our businesses have moved their operations to their employees' homes. High-speed Internet is vital to the present and future of these communities and our region.

As the regional economic development entity for southwest Wisconsin, we realize this need and fully support the application and efforts to install infrastructure in this area of Richland County and Sauk County.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Abby M. Haas". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Abby" being more prominent than the last name "Haas".

Abby Haas
President
Prosperity Southwest Wisconsin



TODD NOVAK

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 51ST ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

(608) 266-7502
Toll-Free: (888) 534-0051
Rep.Novak@legis.wi.gov

P.O. Box 8933
Madison, WI 53708-8933

03/16/2022

Wisconsin Broadband Office
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
Hill Farms State Office Building
North Tower, 6th Floor
4822 Madison Yards Way
Madison, WI 53705

Dear Broadband Expansion Grant Program Review Committee,

I would like to express my support for WiConnect Wireless's Broadband Expansion Grant application for its proposed project in the service area near the Town of Ithaca in Richland County. The project proposes to provide fiber broadband to 128 eligible homes, 19 businesses, and covers 31 miles along roadways in rural areas near the Town of Ithaca.

Improving broadband access and speeds in rural areas, such as those surrounding the Town of Ithaca, is costly due to low customer density. This project is currently estimated to cost over \$885,000. WiConnect Wireless is seeking a grant for the estimated costs which amount to \$353,000. WiConnect Wireless intends to build 31 miles of new fiber which will reach nearly 150 eligible locations.

WiConnect Wireless is ready to help facilitate deploying broadband networks in rural Wisconsin. Grant funding to deploy fiber in the area around the Town of Ithaca will accelerate fiber deployment. Absent the grant funding, these upgrades may not occur for several years. The potential impact of this funding within areas of the 51st Assembly District is significant.

Lack of access to high speed internet is a concern that I continue to hear from numerous constituents struggling with this issue. Residents in the rural areas need improved broadband service for business, education, and telehealth. Without adequate broadband service small businesses have difficulty operating, students struggle to complete homework, and in-home patient monitoring and telehealth visits are nearly impossible. These issues existed prior to the pandemic; yet they were highlighted and exacerbated as life went virtual during the early portions of the pandemic. As we emerge and recover from the pandemic, we have an opportunity to correct this inequity and provide increased connectivity by awarding these grant funds. I urge you to support this application and request that you award grant funding to WiConnect Wireless in order to address the urgent needs of residents in and around the Town of Ithaca.

Sincerely,

State Representative
51st Assembly District
Wisconsin Legislature

Conclusion

WiConnect Wireless has a proven track record of providing reliable internet to very rural markets of Southwestern Wisconsin. Our service provides a large economic impact in the communities we service by providing hi paying technical and skilled labor wages. The additional economic impact of fiber internet to this rural community will help to make Ithaca Township and more enjoyable place to live and work. We look forward to continuing to provide a much-needed service to our family, friends, neighbors, and business owners for many years to come.